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ABSTRACT

Four areas relating to listening and language learning are examined: current directions in second language instruction, listening instruction in second language programs, listening as a means to an end versus listening comprehension as an end in itself, and the influence of listening research on materials development for second language instruction. Listening is viewed not only as a critical component of language use but also as a skill that is neglected in the language classroom. The emphasis on teaching speech skills has led to the neglect of listening instruction. Only recently have instructional materials focused on listening with understanding as the end product. It appears now that researchers, theorists, and materials developers share similar concerns in second language learning and teaching. This convergence includes the emphasis on genuine language, a focus on content which conveys meaning, and the recognition of levels of learning that have different characteristics requiring different instructional formats. It is suggested that listening comprehension, formerly a neglected skill area, may well be the main area of focus in the second language profession during the 1980's. (RW)

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LISTENING AND LANGUAGE LEARNING: ASPECTS OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

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The first section of this paper reviews some of the significant features which characterize current directions in second language instruction. The second portion examines the status of listening as a neglected skill in second language instruction. In the third part of the presentation a differentiation between "listening as a MEANS to another end" and "listening as an END in itself" is examined. The fourth section relates listening research and materials development to second language theory. The concluding portion of the paper presents some final notes.

SECTION I. CURRENT DIRECTIONS IN SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Looking back over the last decade and a half, we see clearly that perspectives on language learning and language teaching have changed in some very basic ways. Significant changes in concepts about the nature of second language learning and learner processes have influenced language pedagogy and are beginning to be reflected in curriculum design, in methodologies, and in the form and the function of instructional materials.

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Some primary features which characterize today's "state of the art" directions in second language learning/teaching are the following:

1) .. a focus on learners as active creators in their learning process, not passive recipients,

2) .. a focus on the individuality of the learner,

3) .. a focus on the intellectual capacities of the learner,

4) .. a focus on the learner's language,

5) .. a focus on the special purpose language needs of particular groups of students,

6) .. a focus on genuine communication,

7) .. a focus on a humanistic classroom,

8) .. a focus on teachers not as drill-leaders and presenters of subject matter, but as managers of language learning experiences.

In following these directions in second language/learning teaching, teachers find themselves facing greatly expanded responsibilities and a wide range of challenges. These include:

1) .. assessing the needs of a particular group of students,

2) .. designing a principled curricular structure and developing appropriate syllabi,

3) .. preparing methodological and procedural frameworks for effecting changes in patterns of classroom interaction,

4) .. evaluating and selecting appropriate texts and instructional materials, and planning adaptations for class use,

5) .. developing new instructional materials for class use.

Within this overall picture of rather revolutionary changes in the state of the art in ESL, virtually every facet of language learning and learner processes has come under scrutiny. It is the purpose of this paper to review several developments in one facet of language learning/teaching, specifically, <u>listening</u> and <u>language learning</u>.

SECTION II. LISTENING, A NEGLECTED AREA IN SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Historically, listening has occupied a position of "non-status" in second language instruction. This section of the discussion will look at some of the possible "hows" and "whys" of listening as a neglected area in instructional programs until recent years.

II.1 Listening, A Critical Component of Language Use but Neglected in the Language Classroom

It is well-documented that listening is the single most frequently used skill in our daily language use. Although skill-use studies vary slightly, in general they agree that the percentages of communicative time are distributed as follows: around 50% listening, around 25% speaking, around 15% reading, and around 10% writing. In his book Human Listening, Processes and Behaviors, Weaver comments:

> For several centuries we have devoted our study and teaching to the expressive part of the communicative process, which we use only about half as much as we use the receptive skills.

Weaver (1972) also comments on the elusiveness of our listening awareness:

> Most people are unaware of the proportion of time they spend listening. After all, listening is neither so dramatic nor so noisy as talking. The talker is the center of attention for all listeners. His behavior is overt and vocal, and he hears and notices his own behavior, whereas listening activity often seems like merely being there - doing nothing. Thus we are likely to remember how much of the time we talk but forget how much we listen.

Morley (1972) has noted our tendency to take listening for granted:

> Perhaps an assumption that listening is a reflex, a little like breathing - listening seldom receives overt teaching attention in one's native language - has masked the importance and complexity of listening with understanding in a non-native language.

It is something of a contradiction, inasmuch as listening is the single most used language skill, that very few instructional materials can be found which are written specifically to help learners to develop listening

comprehension in a second language. Teachers can choose from hundreds of second language texts devoted to grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, speaking, reading, and writing but can find only a handful of texts devoted to listening. In fact, until the last decade, very little attention was directed toward providing learners with listening experiences explicitly designed to help them to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in processing auditory information in second language.

II.2 Factors Which May Have Contributed to the Neglect of Listening in Second Language Instruction.

The reasons for the "benign neglect" of the listening area in second language instruction are by no means clear. Some factors which may have influenced the language teaching field in this regard are the following.

II.2.1 Intense Concentration on "Speaking" a Language

During the past forty to fifty years of modern language instruction, the concentration has been on the end-product of oral production. Under the strong influence of audio-lingualism, the primary goal was to teach second language learners to speak the second language.[1] The primary focus was on production not comprehension. Notice, we seldom ask anyone "How many languages do you understand?"

II.2.2 Listening Used as a MEANS to Teach Speaking but not Taught as an END in Itself (i.e., for Comprehension of Meaning)

The use of listening as a means to teach other aspects of language, namely oral production, may have obscured the fact that listening itself was not "taught." Certainly audio-lingualists recognized the importance of listening, as the very name "audio-lingual" demonstrates. "Listening" provided the input for imitation. However, the term "listening" was applied to the need for the auditory processing of a very short speech segment (word, phrase, sentence) in order to reproduce it, with mastery of oral grammar and mastery of pronunciation as the goals of instruction.

Traditional books contain much terminology which

[1] See Postovsky's comments (1977) on why, "premature emphasis on oral production tends to increase the complexity of the learning task and to cause some undesirable side effects."

gives the impression that they are addressed to listening, when in fact the desired end-product is speaking proficiency, not listening proficiency. The terms audio-lingual, aural-oral method, mim-mem (mimicry-memorization), aural grammar, and oral communication, all give the illusion of teaching "listening."

What must be recognized and clarified is a distinction between listening as a tool, that is instrumental, and listening as the end-product, that is, instructional protocol designed to assist students toward skill-building in aural comprehension for communication.*

II.2.3 The False Assumption that Listening is a PASSIVE Skill

Listening, along with reading, traditionally has been assumed to be a "passive" process. Nothing is further from the truth. As Postovsky (1977) has noted:

> Listening is not a passive skill; it requires full participation and the undivided attention of the learner. And when the nature of the skill is understood, the process becomes exciting.

The problem of listener awareness comes into play here and, again, as Weaver (1972) observed, "listening activity often seems like merely being there -- doing nothing: and as Morley (1972) noted, "perhaps an assumption that listening is a reflex, a little like breathing, has masked the importance and complexity of listening."

II.2.4 The Absence of a Model from First Language Teaching as Listening is Seldom Taught in First Language Instruction

We seldom teach listening classes in first language and perhaps, by analogy, we assumed that it was not necessary to teach listening in a second language. In any case, we have few ready instructional procedures which we can transfer from the first language classroom to the second language classroom. Traditional language arts programs give little overt attention to listening throughout the entire range from kindergarten through secondary school. A notable exception, of course, is the study of phonics and sound/symbol corres-

*Note: In a later section of this paper a two-value definition is suggested for the term "listening" whenever it is applied to listening-related activities of any kind in second language instruction.

pondences. However, in the phonics instruction, notice that listening is used as the tool, while the end-product is the facilitating of reading and writing skills, not the development of listening comprehension skills.

As noted previously, because listening is given little overt attention, perhaps we assume listening to be vaguely like a reflex, something we are born doing -- or develop so easily that it needs no special attention. Perhaps, by analogy, we have assumed that "adequate" listening in a second language will develop by itself. This may be a "half-truth"; obviously second language learners do develop "some" skill in listening. However, the following questions suggest themselves:

1) Is the listening skill which second language learners develop "adequate"?
2) For what purposes is it "adequate"?
3) Is it marked by superficial "coping" strategies?
4) If provided with guided instructional materials designed to assist them in developing strategies for processing aural data, might not students develop listening skill which is more than "adequate"?
5) Given assistance, might not students develop listening strategies at a more comprehensive hierarchical level, rather than "coping" strategies which appear to focus on a linear surface structure level?
6) With a supportive listening program, might not there be less psychological trauma to students who often seem to be "on the defensive," appearing to be "fighting off" a deluge of largely meaningless sound, with anxiety reactions which are clearly detrimental to concentration and effective comprehension.

II.2.5 The Fact that How we Listen and Comprehend Language Remains Largely a Mystery

As Sittler commented in the introduction to a pre-conference publication of papers by participants in a special invitational seminar titled Seminar in Language Learning Via Listening, which was held during the fourth AILA Congress in Stuttgart in August 1975:

The primacy of hearing in the language learning process has never been thoroughly investigated nor scientifically tested.

Some progress has been made since 1975 and slowly research is beginning to contribute to our knowledge about human auditory-cognitive processing systems and auditory-cognitive strategies. However, a few "answers" only seem to generate even more questions:

1) Is auditory perception in a second language ever "the same" as one's auditory perception in one's first language?

2) What are the components which make aural comprehension "easy" in a first language but "difficult" in a second language?

3) Is "comprehension" in a second language like "comprehension" in a first language?

II.2.6 The Overwhelming Complexity of the Components of the "Listening Act" may have Discouraged Research and Materials Development

Perhaps the difficulties of trying to identify and to describe the inter-related aspects and levels of the "listening act," of trying to break it down into components for manageable classroom and laboratory presentation, were factors in discouraging the development of instructional materials. This may be especially true, inasmuch as we have no existing model readily available from first language teaching.

To review, then, although the reasons for the neglect of listening skill-building in the second language field are not clear, the six factors cited above may have played a role: (1) our intense concentration on "speaking" a language, (2) our use of listening as a MEANS to teach speaking but not as an END in itself, (3) our false assumption that listening is a PASSIVE skill, (4) the absence of a model from first language teaching as listening is seldom taught in first language instruction, (5) the fact that how we listen and comprehend language remains largely a mystery, and (6) the overwhelming complexity of the components of the "listening act" may have discouraged research and materials development.

SECTION III. LISTENING AS A MEANS TO ANOTHER END OR LISTENING COMPREHENSION AS AN END IN ITSELF

III.1 Definitions

As noted earlier in this paper, until the last decade there was very little seriously principled instructional material available which was explicitly designed to provide learners with guided listening experiences toward skill-building in aural comprehension.

One might now ask the question, "Over the past forty to fifty years haven't we been providing language learners with classroom and language laboratory experiences in which there has been purposeful listening and active participation?" And the answer is, "Yes, indeed." Certainly as far as recorded material is concerned, purposeful listening and active participation were integral parts of the Henry Higgins - Eliza Doolittle instruction. Notice, however, that the purposeful listening was a means to another end, that is, proficiency in speaking, not proficiency in listening. In more modern times certainly "pattern practice," as exemplified by the Lado/Fries text English Pattern Practices, stressed purposeful listening and active participation. Notice again, however, that the purposeful listening and active participation were as a means to another end, that is proficiency in oral production, not proficiency in listening comprehension.

The need here is to distinguish between

a) listening used to enhance proficiency in another language area, and

b) listening used to enhance proficiency in listening comprehension itself.

It seems useful at this point to suggest a two-value definition for the term "listening" in second language instruction. One value can be defined as:

LISTENING AS A MEANS TO ANOTHER END

usually as a means to establish oral production. The other value can be defined as:

LISTENING COMPREHENSION AS AN END IN ITSELF

that is, listening activities with a focus on listening to understand the message.

III.2 Examples of LISTENING AS A MEANS TO ANOTHER END

An early example of LISTENING AS A MEANS TO ANOTHER END is one which dates back to the year 1902. One can

suppose that it is similar to the kind of recorded lesson which George Bernard Shaw described in Pygmalion and which, in turn, has been enjoyed world-wide in performances of My Fair Lady.

The first example is a French lesson designed to improve the student's pronunciation of a list of French words, phrases, and sentences (French Lesson Series, International Correspondence Schools). The student had two items: (1) a black cylinder recording to be played on an Edison windup cylinder player with amplification provided by a brass horn attached to the sleeve which contained the needle, (2) a worksheet which contained brief instructions, a list of words, phrases, and sentences, and a translation for each of the items on the list. The student was instructed to listen and to repeat as each item was given by the model. (See Figure 1.)

Another more recent example of material which employed LISTENING AS A MEANS TO ANOTHER END comes from the English text English Pattern Practices (1953; 1957; 1958) by Robert Lado and Charles Fries. A sample from this text is shown in Figure Number Two. In the introduction for the text and its taped laboratory materials:

> These lessons represent a new theory of language learning, the idea that TO LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE ONE MUST ESTABLISH ORALLY THE PATTERNS OF THE LANGUAGE AS SUBCONSCIOUS HABITS. These oral practices are directed specifically to that end.
>
> In PATTERN PRACTICE as developed at the English Language Institute and as embodied in these lessons, the student is led to practice a pattern, changing some element of that pattern each time, so that normally he never repeats the same sentence twice. Furthermore, his attention is drawn to the changes, which are stimulated by pictures, oral substitutions, etc., and thus the PATTERN ITSELF, THE SIGNIFICANT FRAMEWORK OF THE SENTENCE, rather than the particular sentence, is driven intensively into his habit reflexes. (See Figure 2.)

In these two examples listening was a part of exercises designed to assist students either toward "improved pronunciation," as in the case of Example Number One, or toward "making grammatical patterns automatic habits," as in the case of Example Number

Figure 1

EXAMPLE #1:
LISTENING AS A MEANS FOR MASTERING PRONUNCIATION

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL
Scranton, Pennyslvania ICS Incorporated
1902 (copyright)
National Textbook Co.

French Lesson Number 14

Directions: Listen to each word or phrase. Repeat it, imitating it as closely as possible. Read the French word or phrase and its English translation.

French	*English*	
aller	to go	
je vais	I go	I am going
il va	he goes	he is going
nous allons	we go	we are going
ils vont	they go	they are going
j'irai	I will go	I am going
arriver	to arrive	
la division	division	
entrer	to enter	
il faut	it is necessary; you must	
il a parlé	he spoke	
il faudra	it will be necessary; you must	
une fois	once	
mourrir	to die	
je meurs	I die	I am dying
nous mourons	we die	we are dying
ils meurent	they die	they are dying
mort	dead	died
je mourai	I will die	I am going to die

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Figure 2

EXAMPLE #2: LISTENING AS A MEANS FOR MASTERING ORAL GRAMMAR

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Ann Arbor, Michigan
1941; 1953; 1957; 1958 (copyrights)
(The University of Michigan Press)
Robert Lado
Charles C. Fries
and the Staff of the
English Language Institute

English Pattern Practices:
Establishing the Patterns as Habits

Lesson I

1. Statements, questions, and answers with IS, ARE, AM (forms of BE).
2. Plural contrasted with singular.

1. Statements, questions, and answers with IS, ARE, AM (forms of BE).

Practice 1. Chart I. This Practice introduces the chart.

Classwork: Open Chart I. Chart I is at the back of the book. Close the book. The chart is now at the right of the book. Repeat the statements after the teacher. Associate the statements with the pictures on the chart.

1. It's a comb.	[ɪts ə kom]
2. It's a watch.	[ɪts ə wač]
3. It's a key.	[ɪts ə ki]
4. It's a pencil.	[ɪts ə pensəl]
5. It's a toothbrush.	[ɪts ə túθbrəš]
6. It's a fork.	[ɪts ə fɔrk]
7. It's an apple.	[ɪts ən ǽpəl]
8. It's an iron.	[ɪts ən airn]

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TEACHER: The teacher should give at least three examples for each Practice. In giving the examples the teacher gives both the teacher's and the student's part, reading from left to right across the page, but indicates with words or gestures which part is for the teacher and which is for the student.

Textbook: Each student has a copy of the text.

The charts are pull-out pages at the back of the text.

Wall Charts: Large wall charts are available for classroom use.

Tapes: Tapes of the lessons are available for laboratory use.

Two. In both instances students were "actively involved" in certain ways and the listening was "purposeful" as defined by each kind of exercise. The LISTENING aspect of the exercise activity was used as a MEANS TO ANOTHER END. These two kinds of exercises are representative of the kinds of materials widely used during the 1940s and 1950s, less widely used during the 1960s and 1970s, but continuing to be used today in many programs.

III.3 Examples of LISTENING COMPREHENSION AS AN END IN ITSELF

Seriously principled instructional materials designed to focus on listening with understanding as itself the end-product are not to be found before the period of the late 1960s and early 1970s. During that span of time, along with a number of other changes in aspects of theory and practice in the second language field, a handful of language teachers/researchers in different locations began to shape instructional materials specifically for aural comprehension.

In 1975 Karl Diller cited three individual listening projects which resulted in sets of instructional materials for listening comprehension. In an article titled "Some Trends for Applied Linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching," he commented on the projects of Asher, Winitz and Reeds, and Morley.

James Asher (1969, 1974) developed a system called TPR or "Total Physical Response." Diller comments:

> James Asher's "Total Physical Response"... stresses listening comprehension. In the first semester 70% of the students' time is spent listening, 20% speaking, and 10% reading and writing. The distinctive characteristic of this method is that every utterance by the teacher is a command or is embedded in a command which the students then act on. They start out with "Stand up!" and "Sit down!" but Asher shows how complex these commands can be by giving this example: "Gregory, find the picture of the beautiful woman with green eyes, long black hair and wearing a sun hat that has red stripes. When you find the picture, show it to the class and describe the woman!" (Asher, et.al., 1974:27). Asher's evidence shows that this is a very effective method indeed, requiring fewer class hours and no homework to outstrip the average college language student on standardized tests.

Harris Winitz and James Reeds (1973, 1975) developed a system called "Rapid Acquisition of a Foreign Language by the Avoidance of Speaking." Diller comments:

> ...in a system developed by Winitz and Reeds (1973), the students are silent and the teacher (or tape recorder) talks 100% of the time. ...the learner's only overt behavior is his choosing of the one picture in a quadrant of four which corresponds to the meaning of each utterance. Actually, for the first utterance there is only one picture, a pencil, and three blank spaces, as the voice says "bleistift." But after that there always is a contrast.
>
> This technique apparently succeeds in teaching vocabulary at a much faster rate than usual -- some fifty words an hour. After the basic grammar and vocabulary are learned, the students are allowed to begin speaking. By postponing pronunciation for so long, it is claimed that the result is much more native-like speech. But up to that point, this method is the most meaningful refutation of the behaviorist maxim that a language is a set of speech habits. Here are students learning language without acquiring any speech habits at all.

Joan Morley (1972, 1973) developed a series of listening comprehension lessons which stress early and extensive listening and require an immediate written response. Students are involved in listening approximately 70% of the time and in reading and writing approximately 30% of the time. The lessons feature a a double listening-task structure in which dictated material is followed by problem-solving directives. The problem-solving aspect of each lesson involves some manner of manipulating the aurally presented material in carefully specified ways. Diller comments:

> At a more advanced level, Joan Morley has developed a book for Improving Aural Comprehension (1972) in English as a Second Language using meaningful material, but unlike Winitz and Reeds, the responses are in writing and require a certain amount of reading. It is the lack of reading which bothers me most about Winitz and Reeds' experiment, for many adults are helped tremendously by the written word.

A sample of a Winitz and Reeds lesson and a sample of a Morley lesson are presented in Figures 3 and 4 as examples of LISTENING COMPREHENSION AS AN END IN ITSELF.

Example Number One is from the Winitz and Reeds series Natural Language Learning (English version). The following comments are excerpts from the Instructions page at the beginning of the text:

> Comprehension means knowing what people say as they talk of objects and events in their environment. Only recently have research scientists in the psychology of language discovered the crucial role played by comprehension training in second language learning. This program teaches understanding of language. Your speaking skills will develop as you learn to understand.
>
> You will not need to memorize anything. You need only to listen and relate what you hear to what you see. You will learn the language in almost the same way a young child learns his first language.
>
> Using this book is simple. You will hear each word or phrase from the accompanying cassette twice. Listen carefully, BUT DO NOT REPEAT THE WORD OR SENTENCE. ONLY LISTEN. Then mark an "x" with the felt marker provided next to the square X below the corresponding picture. Now turn the page and you will see a printed "x" next to the correct answer...
>
> Remember, do not repeat items aloud. Simply listen and mark. If you follow these instructions you will perform correctly almost every time. (See Figure 3.)

Example Number One is from the Morley text Improving Aural Comprehension (1972, 1973). In the introduction to the Teacher's Book of Readings the following comments are made:

> One emphasis of the workbook is on factual listening. A second emphasis is on abstract relationships and organizational methods. This double emphasis is accomplished by the double listening-task structure of each lesson. The first task is writing from dictation. The second task is listening to oral questions or problems and

Figure 3

EXAMPLE #1:
LISTENING AS A MEANS TO DEVELOP LISTENING COMPREHENSION

GENERAL LINGUISTICS CORPORATION
Kansas City, Missouri
1975 (copyright)

Harris Winitz
James A. Reeds
Paul A. Garcia

Natural Language Learning (English)
Volume 3 – Lesson 5

Directions: (repeated)
Using this book is simple. You will hear each word or phrase from the accompanying cassette twice. Listen carefully. BUT DO NOT REPEAT THE WORD OR SENTENCE. ONLY LISTEN. Then mark an "x" with the felt marker provided next to the square X below the corresponding picture. Now turn the page and you will see a printed "x" next to the correct answer.

Remember, do not repeat items aloud. Simply listen and mark.

Workbook Frame #24:

A picture of a book.	A picture of the teacher walking.	A picture of the judge sleeping.
☒	☒	☒

Tape Script: Twenty-four. The teacher is walking. (short pause)
The teacher is walking. (longer pause)

Workbook Frame #25:

A picture of a cat.	A picture of the king walking.	A picture of the head and shoulders of the king.
☒	☒	☒

Tape Script: Twenty-five.

The king is walking. (short pause)
The king is walking. (longer pause)
The teacher is walking. (short pause)
the teacher is walking. (longer pause)

making up answers from the dictated information. Sometimes the answers involve only simple copying. More often the answers involve manipulating some of the dictated data in some way. Students check their own answers after the dictation and again after answering the questions so they have immediate feedback about their progress.

Students were instrumental in developing the dual organization of the workbook: each unit is planned around a concept area while individual lessons also are planned around one of 15 content area threads which run throughout. It is the deliberate intent of the lessons to actually give the students opportunities to learn new information -- as well as to "review" in English -- as they practice listening. (See Figure 4.)

III.4 Listening Approaches to Language Learning

Two listening research/materials development projects of the seventies, those of Sittler and Postovsky, featured listening approaches to language learning.

Working at the University of Giesen in Germany, Edward Sittler (1975) developed an elaborate listening-learning program for German speakers learning English which was called "Audio-Immersion: A New Approach to Language Acquisition."

Working at the Defense Language Institute, West Coast Branch, Presidio of Monterey, California, Valerian Postovsky (1974) developed a listening comprehension program for English speakers learning Russian. This program featured an initial listening/writing phase of instruction with an explicit "Delay in Oral Practice at the Beginning of Second Language Learning." More recent important contributions to the area of listening approaches to language learning have been made by Nord (1975), Gary (1975, 1981), Parent (1976), and Terrell (1977).

Postovsky's rationale is as follows:

Is "learning by doing" an efficient way to learn a foreign language? The answer to this question is yes, provided we have a clear notion of what "doing" is in different phases of the language learning process. In the initial phase of learning,

Figure 4

EXAMPLE #2: LISTENING AS A MEANS TO DEVELOP LISTENING COMPREHENSION

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN — Joan Morley
Ann Arbor, Michigan
1972 (1973)
(The University of Michigan Press)

Improving Aural Comprehension
Unit 3 – Lesson 19

Directions in the Student's Book:
Listen carefully. First practice the vocabulary. Then listen to each statement. Find the correct square. Write the correct word from the list below.

Instruction in the Teacher's Book:
This is a difficult lesson. It is a test of memory, logic and spatial relationships. Students must concentrate very hard. Read slowly and repeat as is necessary. Give adequate writing time.

Tapes: (A recording of everything in both student workbook and teacher book of readings.)

Workbook Page 137:

SPACE PUZZLE: WHO PLAYS THE GUITAR?

Five students from five different countries were studying English in the United States. They lived in adjoining houses. They planned to study in five different cities. Each of the five had a different hobby.

	Red House	Blue House	Green House	White House	Purple House
Country					
Field					
City					
Hobby					

Country	City	Field	Hobby
Turkey	San Francisco	Engineering	Dancing
Peru	Miami	Law	soccer
Korea	Chicago	Business	swimming
Spain	New York	Chemistry	travel
India	Boston	Psychology	playing the guitar

Teacher's Book Page 76:

1. The student from the country of Turkey lives in the middle house.
   Write *Turkey* in the correct square.
2. The student in the field of Engineering lives on the far right.
   Write *Engineering* in the correct square.
3. The student who's going to New York to study lives next to the red house.
   (continue....).

> I suggest "doing" is developing an auditory receptive ability to comprehend the spoken language. At this stage the learner develops some covert processing strategies to transform foreign auditory input into meaning. The process serves to imprint the integrated structure of language in human memory on the level of recognition. When new linguistic patterns have been thus perceived frequent reactivation of these patterns on the recognition level will make them more and more retrievable, and as linguistic features of a foreign language become retrievable, spontaneous vocal responses follow. At this stage of development the learner is ready for oral practice and the proposition that "one learns to speak a foreign language by speaking it" makes sense. (Postovsky, 1977)

In developing principled instructional materials for listening, the following criteria are suggested by Postovsky.

> We must remember, however, that mere exposure of students to the sounds of a foreign language is not sufficient. A successful aural comprehension course must satisfy at least three essential conditions:
>
> 1) the language material presented to the students must convey meaning from the first hour of instruction;
>
> 2) a provision must be made for a student response which will verify comprehension of each utterance or a short passage immediately after delivery;
>
> 3) students must be challenged to problem-solve and to guess at the meaning of unfamiliar elements in a foreign utterance on the basis of context and other cues in the given linguistic environment.

Note again, MERE EXPOSURE OF STUDENTS TO THE SOUNDS OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IS NOT SUFFICIENT.

SECTION IV. RELATING LISTENING RESEARCH AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT TO SECOND LANGUAGE THEORY

IV.1 Introduction

In the work of researching and preparing principled instructional materials for listening and language learning in the years ahead, it is important to relate our work to second language theory.

In this section of the paper some aspects of recent reports by Burt and Dulay, Krashen, and Widdowson and Brumfit will be summarized and related to listening research and materials development. These three papers appeared in Alatis, Altman, and Alatis, 1981.

IV.2 Second Language Learning: Burt and Dulay, 1982

In a 1981 paper titled, "Optimal Language Learning Environments," Burt and Dulay report on their survey of recent second language research and the four major conclusions which they have drawn from relevant studies.

The first of their conclusions is that ...a natural language environment is necessary for optimal language acquisition. Such an environment is described as existing "whenever the focus of the speakers is on the content of the communication rather than on the language itself."

The second condition for an optimal language learning environment, as reported by Burt and Dulay, is that...communicative interactions must match the learner's level of language development in order to maximize the student's likelihood for success. These learner levels and communicative interactions are important in relation to the previously discussed work of Asher, Winitz and Reeds, Morley, and Postovsky. Burt and Dulay comment that:

> When learning a new language, learners appear to pass through at least three kinds of communication phases: one-way, partial two-way, and full two-way.

They characterize one-way communication as taking place when a learner is listening to or reading in a second language with the communication targeted toward the learner but not issuing from the learner. They comment that:

> Listening to speeches and radio programs, watching films and most television programs, and reading books and magazines are examples of one-way communication.

Obviously, auditory and video materials in a learning laboratory center, supplemented perhaps by some written materials, are ideal for instructional one-way communication experiences. Notice, however, if indeed they are to qualify as instructional one-way communication experiences, it is important to heed Postovsky's precautionary comment that mere exposure of students to the sounds of a foreign language is not sufficient. If such experiences are to be truly "instructional experiences" and not just "exposure experiences," as is our teacher mandate as "facilitators of learning," Postovsky's essential conditions for aural comprehension programming are important to consider again. They are (1) the necessity for the language material to convey meaning from the very first hour of instruction, (2) the necessity to provide for a student response which will verify comprehension immediately after the delivery of each utterance or short passage, and (3) the necessity to challenge students to problem-solve and guess at the meaning of unfamiliar elements on the basis of context and other cues in the given linguistic environment, and in the case of video, in the para-linguistic environment as well.

Burt and Dulay describe partial two-way communication as taking place when communication is targeted toward the learner and a response issues from the learner but the response is either non-verbal, such as a nod or a physical response, or is in the learner's native language, but not the target language. It is easy to identify some of the materials of Asher, Winitz and Reeds, Morley, and Postovsky as instructional partial two-way communication experiences.

Finally, full two-way communication, as identified by Burt and Dulay, involves the learner as speaking in the target language and both sending and receiving verbal messages.

The conclusions which these authors draw relative to this condition for optimal language learning environment are (1) "that learners appear to tend towards these types of communication at different times in the learning process," and (2) "that apparently matching the type of communicative interaction with the learners' level of language development maximizes the students' likelihood for success."

The third feature reported by Burt and Dulay as important to optimal language learning environments is that ...target language input must be comprehensible to the learner. The concrete referents in the form of visual aids and motor activities and the "here-and-now" kinds of extra-linguistic support which they suggest remind us again of the listening materials discussed in earlier sections of this paper.

Burt and Dulay report a fourth conclusion, that ...language learners attend to, and acquire, the language and dialect spoken by people with whom they identify.

IV.3 Second Language Learning: Krashen, 1981

In a 1981 paper titled, "Effective Second Language Acquisition: Insights from Research," Krashen summarizes several theoretical hypotheses in second language acquisition research and follows with a discussion of their implications for teaching methods and materials. The five hypotheses are as follows:

a) The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis (noted as "perhaps the most fundamental") which proposes that there is a difference between subconciously acquiring a language and consciously learning a language; that acquiring is "picking up a language" as children do in a first language and that there is a "language acquisition device" or LAD which does not disappear at puberty; that learning a language is "formal knowledge" or "knowing about" language.

b) The Natural Order Hypothesis which proposes that grammatical items are acquired in a predictable order; that some forms tend to be acquired early and some late; that there are predictable "transitional" or intermediate stages which are marked by predictable "errors."

c) The Monitor Hypothesis which shows the interrelationship between acquisition and learning; it proposes that our fluency in second language performance is due to what we have acquired, not what we have learned; that conscious grammar knowledge is available only as a Monitor, or editor.

d) The Input Hypothesis which proposes that in language acquisition we first "go for meaning" and acquire structure as a result of understanding the message, the opposite of some language

teaching which assumes that students should first master forms and then "learn how to use them"; that it is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for language acquisition that the person understand, via hearing or reading, input language that contains structure "a bit beyond" the acquirer's current level of competence; that we need not teach speaking directly, but rather that speech "emerges" after the acquirer has built up sufficient competence via input.

e) The Affective Filter Hypothesis which proposes that the effect of affect is not directly on the LAD, or Language Acquisition Device, but rather, that affective variables may act to block input from the LAD; that acquirers acquire at different rates depending on the strength of the Affective Filter according to personality, the relationship between the acquirer and the source of the input, and on the acquisition situation; that Filter strength increases markedly after puberty, but that teachers can do a great deal to keep the adult student's Filter as low as possible.

Krashen continues with the comment that the most important implication of these hypotheses is that acquisition is central and that our pedagogical programs in the second language field should focus on supplying students with input which encourages acquisition and on helping the students to get input outside of the classroom.

He characterizes optimal input as follows:

-- it is comprehensible;

-- it is interesting and/or relevant to the student; (Krashen notes that only genuinely "communicative" activities will strike "deep" enough, and that traditionally styled "meaningful" drills and exercises are not sufficient.)

-- it is not grammatically sequenced; (Krashen notes that grammatical sequencing is not only unnecessary, but undesirable when the goal is acquisition and not learning.)

-- it is supplied in great quantities; (Krashen notes that the approaches of Asher and of Terrell very likely owe much of their success to the fact that they provide an input-rich classroom for the entire class period.)

-- input should be presented in such a way that it will not encourage a strong Affective Filter and,

in Stevick's terms, "put the student on the defensive";

-- input should give beginning and intermediate students tools which will enable them to obtain additional input outside of the classroom.

Krashen concludes by noting that according to current theory, language acquisition occurs when we are not focused on language per se, but when we are engaged in using language, that is, when we are concentrating on understanding a spoken or written message. He sees the job of teachers as being "to help students acquire, to provide them with comprehensible input they cannot get from the outside world, and to help them to develop to the point where they can improve without us." He calls this "our primary responsibility."

Again, in the work of preparing principled materials specifically for listening skill-building, there is much of interest and of relevance in the hypotheses summarized by Krashen and their implications for teaching methods and materials.

IV.4 Second Language Teaching: Widdowson and Brumfit, 1981

In a 1981 paper titled, "Issues in Second Language Syllabus Design," Widdowson and Brumfit summarize their primary concerns about issues in second language syllabus design as follows:

> Structural syllabuses are based on formal linguistic categories. Criteria for moving from simple to complex are undefined. Possible alternatives include types of communicative syllabuses. But do such "communicative syllabuses" facilitate use any better than structural ones which are economical and involve no break with tradition? Neither type seems ideal. Possible improvements may be found by examining:
>
> 1. traditional pedagogic practices from a communicative perspective;
> 2. the value of fluency activities (a methodological solution);
> 3. attempts to "marry" functional and formal requirements, and most important;
> 4. the role of content.
>
> True communicative teaching may depend on our stressing language as a means to acquire knowledge, rather than as an end in itself.

As with Burt and Dulay and as with Krashen, the viewpoints of Widdowson and Brumfit are important ones

to study in the research and development of instructional materials for listening skill-building.

IV.5 Convergences, Similarities, and Mutual Concerns

It is interesting to note some convergences on common focal points, some shared features of second language learning/teaching among theorists, among researchers/materials developers, and more importantly, between the two groups.

Observe the following features of mutual concern:

1) -- the importance of language input, especially extensive listening;

2) -- levels or phases of learning which have different characteristics requiring different instructional formats;

3) -- a focus on content which conveys meaning (i.e., is comprehensible) from the very beginning;

4) -- an emphasis on genuine language and genuinely interesting communication;

5) -- problem-solving and active manipulation of information received;

6) -- verification of comprehension, especially written or non-verbal;

7) -- an emphasis on instructional experiences which are non-threatening to learners so that learning is not blocked.

More and more listening appears to play a key role. It is interesting to recall Belasco's (1967) comment of nearly 15 years ago: "...the key to achieving proficiency in speaking is achieving proficiency in listening comprehension."

SECTION V. FINAL NOTES

It has been the purpose of this paper to look at four areas relating to listening and language learning:

1) current directions in second language instruction,

2) listening, a neglected area in second language instruction,

3) listening as a MEANS to another end, or listening comprehension, as an END in itself,

4) relating listening research and materials development to second language theory.

It is interesting to speculate that: WHEREAS, listening comprehension was the neglected skill area until the last decade, it may very well be the area of primary focus in the second language profession during the decade ahead.

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